

## Unit 11: Historical Overview--Armenia

### Objectives

At the end of this section, you will

### Be aware of the following

- Long history of Armenia serving as a buffer state between surrounding nations
- Early date at which Armenia accepted Christianity
- Impact of Saint Mesrop in development of the Armenian language
- Nature and reasons for Ottoman suppression of Armenians in 1895
- Russian persecution of Armenians in the early 1900's
- Far reaching consequences of the 1915-17 genocide of Armenians at the hand of Turkey
- Positive impact of industrialization under Stalin's rule
- Issues leading to the founding of the Armenian Republic
- Festering conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh
- Large percentage of Armenian people who live outside the Armenian Republic

### Identify

- Anatolia
- Tigran the Great
- Parthians
- Saint Mesrop
- Saint Gregory the Illuminator
- Ashot I
- Byzantine Empire
- Seljuk
- Cilicia
- Caucasasia
- TSFSR
- Nagorno-Karabakh

- Nikhichevan
- Glasnost
- Perestroika
- Mikhail Gorbachev
- Pogrom
- Fidain
- Armenian Diaspora
- Nikita Khrushchev

### Realize

- Nature of the first and second Golden Ages in Armenia history
- Roots of consciousness raising felt by Armenia in the mid-1800's
- Makeup of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (TSFSR-Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia)
- Political/social corruption endemic to Communist rule in Armenia
- Issues prompting Armenian nationalism in 1988
- Nationalist Republic of Armenia which includes people of the far-flung Diaspora

## Unit 11: Historical Overview--Armenia

### I. Historical Background

#### 1. The Ancient Period

**a. Early Settlements** "People first settled what is now Armenia in about 6000 B.C. The first major state in the region was the kingdom of Urartu (uh-RAHR-too), which appeared around Lake Van in the thirteenth century B.C. and reached its peak in the ninth century B.C. Shortly after the fall of Urartu to the Assyrians, the Indo-European-speaking proto-Armenians migrated, probably from the west, onto the Armenian Plateau and mingled with the local people of the Hurrian civilization, which at that time extended into Anatolia (ah-nah-TOH-lee-ah, present-day Asian Turkey) from its center in Mesopotamia.

Greek historians first mentioned the Armenians in the mid-sixth century B.C.

Ruled for many centuries by the Persians, Armenia became a buffer state between the Greeks and Romans to the west and the Persians and Arabs of the Middle East.

It reached its greatest size and influence under King Tigran II, also known as Tigranes (ti-GRAY-nee-z) or Tigran the Great (r. 95-55 B.C.). During his reign, Armenia stretched from the Mediterranean Sea northeast to the Mtkvari River (called the Kura [kuh-RAH] in Azerbaijan) in present-day Georgia.



Tigran and his son, Artavazd II, made Armenia a center of Hellenic culture during their reigns" (Unless stated otherwise, the following quotes come from Library of Congress Country Study--Armenia, 1995).

**b. Rome and Parthians** "By 30 B.C., Rome conquered the Armenian Empire, and for the next 200 years Armenia often was a pawn of the Romans in campaigns against their Central Asian enemies, the Parthians (PAHR-thee-ahn). However, a new dynasty, the Arsacids, took power in Armenia in A.D. 53 under the Parthian king, Tiridates I, who defeated Roman forces in A.D. 62. Rome's Emperor Nero then conciliated the Parthians by personally crowning Tiridates king of Armenia. For much of its subsequent history, Armenia was not united under a single sovereign but was usually divided between empires and among local Armenian rulers."

## 2. Early Christianity

**a. Initial conversion** "After contact with centers of early Christianity at Antioch and Edessa, Armenia accepted Christianity as its state religion in A.D. 306 (the traditional date--the actual date may have been as late as A.D. 314), following miracles said to have been performed by Saint Gregory the Illuminator, son of a Parthian nobleman."



Thus Armenians claim that Tiridates III (tir-ah-DAYT-eez, A.D. 238-314) was the first ruler to officially Christianize his people, his conversion predating the conventional date (A.D. 312) of Constantine the Great's personal acceptance of Christianity on behalf of the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire)."

**b. Linguistic developments** "Early in the fifth century A.D., Saint Mesrop (mes-ROHP), also known as Mashtots (mash-TOHTS), devised an alphabet for the Armenian language, and religious and historical works began to appear as part of the effort to consolidate the influence of Christianity."

**c. First Golden Age** "For the next two centuries, political unrest paralleled the exceptional development of literary and religious life that became known as the first golden age of Armenia.



In several administrative forms, Armenia remained part of the Byzantine Empire (BIZ-ahn-teen, the eastern Roman Empire @476-1453 A.D.) until the mid-seventh century.

**d. Arab governance** "In A.D. 653, the empire, finding the region difficult to govern, ceded Armenia to the Arabs. In A.D. 806, the Arabs established the noble Bagratid family as governors, and later kings, of a semiautonomous Armenian state.

## II. The Middle Ages

**1. Second Golden Age 862-977** "Particularly under Bagratid kings Ashot I (also known as Ashot the Great or Ashot V, r. A.D. 862-90) and Ashot III (r. A.D. 952-77), a flourishing of art and literature accompanied a second golden age of Armenian history. The relative prosperity of other kingdoms in the region enabled the Armenians to develop their culture while remaining segmented among jurisdictions of varying degrees of autonomy granted by the Arabs."



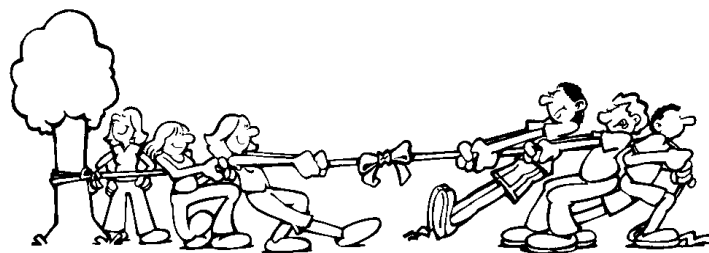
**2. Lesser Armenia** "Then, after eleventh-century invasions from the west by the Byzantine Greeks and from the east by the Seljuk Turks, the independent kingdoms in Armenia proper collapsed, and a new Armenian state, the kingdom of Lesser Armenia, formed in Cilicia (sah-LIH-shee-ah) along the northeasternmost shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

As an ally of the kingdoms set up by the European armies of the Crusades, Cilician Armenia fought against the rising Muslim threat on behalf of the Christian nations of Europe until internal rebellions and court intrigue brought its downfall, at the hands of the Central Asian Mamluk (MAM-look) Turks in 1375. Cilician Armenia left notable monuments of art, literature, theology, and jurisprudence. It also served as the door through which Armenians began emigrating to points west, notably Cyprus, Marseilles, Cairo, Venice, and even Holland."

**3. Mamluk Overrule** "The Mamluks controlled Cilician Armenia until the Ottoman Turks conquered the region in the sixteenth century. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Turks and the Persians divided Caucasian (kah-KAY-zhahn, mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Seas) Armenia to the northeast between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

The Persians dominated the area of modern Armenia, around Lake Sevan and the city of Erevan. From the fifteenth century until the early twentieth century, most Armenians were ruled by the Ottoman Turks through the millet (system allowing self-government of non-Muslim minorities) system, which recognized the ecclesiastical authority of the Armenian Apostolic Church over the Armenian people."

### III. Between Russia and Turkey



"Beginning in the eighteenth century, the Russian Empire played a growing role in determining the fate of the Armenians, although those in Anatolia remained under Turkish control, with tragic consequences that would endure well into the twentieth century."

## 1. Russian Influence Expands

**a. Turmoil** "In the eighteenth century, Transcaucasia (the region including the Greater Caucasus mountain range as well as the lands to the south and west) became the object of a military-political struggle among three empires: Ottoman Turkey, tsarist Russia, and Safavid (sah-FAH-vahd) Persia. In 1828 Russia defeated Persia and annexed the area around Erevan, bringing thousands of Armenians into the Russian Empire."

**b. Tzarist oversight** "In the next half-century, three related processes began to intensify the political and national consciousness of the ethnic and religious communities of the Caucasus region: the imposition of tsarist rule; the rise of a market and capitalist economy; and the emergence of secular national intelligentsias."



Tsarism brought Armenians from Russia and from the former Persian provinces under a single legal order. The tsarist system also brought relative peace and security by fostering commerce and industry, the growth of towns, and the building of railroads, thus gradually ending the isolation of many villages."

**c. Ottoman flux** "In the mid-nineteenth century, a major movement toward centralization and reform, called the Tanzimat, swept through the Ottoman Empire, whose authority had been eroded by corruption and delegation of control to local fiefdoms. Armenian subjects benefited somewhat from these reforms; for instance, in 1863 a special Armenian constitution was granted. When the reform movement was ended in the 1870s by reactionary factions, however, Ottoman policy toward subject nationalities became less tolerant, and

the situation of the Armenians in the empire began to deteriorate rapidly."

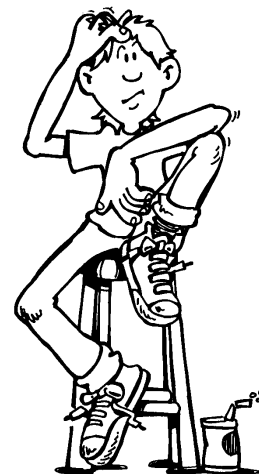
## 2. National Self-Awareness

**a. Roots of consciousness** "The Armenians themselves changed dramatically in the mid-nineteenth century.

An intellectual awakening influenced by Western and Russian ideas, a new interest in Armenian history, and an increase in social interaction created a sense of secular nationality among many Armenians. Instead of conceiving of themselves solely as a religious community, Armenians--especially the urban middle class--began to feel closer kinship with Christian Europe and greater alienation from the Muslim peoples among whom they lived."

**b. Appeal to Europe** "Lacking faith in reform within the empire, Armenian leaders began to appeal to the European powers for assistance. In 1878 Armenian delegates appeared at the Congress of Berlin, where the European powers were negotiating the disposition of Ottoman territories."

**c. The Armenian question** "Although Armenian requests for European protection went largely unanswered in Berlin, the 'Armenian question' became a point of contention in the complex European diplomacy of the late nineteenth century, with Russia and Britain acting as the chief sponsors of Armenian interests on various issues."



**d. Independence moves** "The Armenian independence movement began as agitation on behalf of liberal democracy by writers, journalists, and teachers. But by the last decade of the nineteenth century, moderate nationalist intellectuals had been



pushed aside by younger, more radical socialists...the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, also known as the Dashnak, a shortened form of its Armenian name), emerged by the early twentieth century as the only real contender for Armenian loyalties. The ARF favored Armenian autonomy in both the Russian and the Ottoman empires rather than full independence for an Armenia in which Russian and Ottoman held components would be unified."

**e. Ottoman suppression, 1895** "In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Armenians' tendency toward Europeanization antagonized Turkish officials and encouraged their view that Armenians were a foreign, subversive element in the sultan's realm.

By 1890 the rapid growth of the Kurdish population in Anatolia, combined with the immigration of Muslims from the Balkans and the Caucasus, had made the Armenian population of Anatolia an increasingly endangered minority. In 1895 Ottoman suspicion of the westernized Armenian population led to the massacre of 300,000 Armenians by special order of the Ottoman government."

**f. Russian persecution, 1903-12** "Meanwhile, on the other side of the Russian border, Armenian churches and schools were closed and church property was confiscated in 1903.



Tatars massacred Armenians in several towns and cities in 1905, and fifty-two Armenian nationalist leaders in Russia were tried en masse for underground activities in 1912."

## IV. The Young Turks

**1. Suppression Continues** "The Armenian population that remained in the Ottoman Empire after the 1895 massacre supported the 1908 revolution of the

Committee of Union and Progress, better known as the Young Turks, who promised liberal treatment of ethnic minorities. However, after its revolution succeeded, the Young Turk government plotted elimination of the Armenians, who were a significant obstacle to the regime's evolving nationalist agenda."

**2. Genocide, 1915-17** "In the early stages of World War I, in 1915 Russian armies advanced on Turkey from the north and the British attempted an invasion from the Mediterranean.

Citing the threat of internal rebellion, the Ottoman government ordered large-scale roundups, deportations, and systematic torture and murder of Armenians beginning in the spring of 1915. Estimates vary from 600,000 to 2 million deaths out of the prewar population of about 3 million Armenians. By 1917 fewer than 200,000 Armenians remained in Turkey."

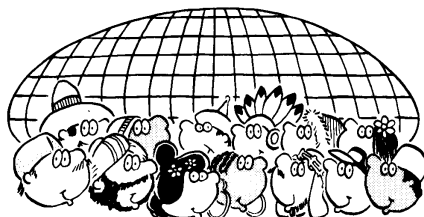
**3. Refugees** "Whatever the exact dimensions of the genocide, Armenians suffered a demographic disaster that shifted the center of the Armenian population from the heartland of historical Armenia to the relatively safer eastern regions held by the Russians.

Tens of thousands of refugees fled to the Caucasus with the retreating Russian armies, and the cities of Baku (bah-KOO) and Tbilisi (tah-bi-LEE-see) filled with Armenians from Turkey.



Ethnic tensions rose in Transcaucasia as the new immigrants added to the pressures on the limited resources of the collapsing Russian Empire."

## V. Into the Soviet Union



**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia** "In 1922 Armenia was combined with Azerbaijan and Georgia to form the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (TSFSR), which was a single republic of the Soviet Union until the federation was dissolved and each part given republic status in 1936. When the TSFSR was formed, the new Soviet government in the Armenian capital of Erevan ruled over a shrunken country with a devastated economy and few resources with which to feed the populace and rebuild itself. In integrating their republic into the newly forming Soviet Union, Armenian communists surrendered the sovereignty that the independent republic had enjoyed briefly.

Although it eliminated rival political parties and restricted the range of public expression, the new government promoted Armenian culture and education, invited artists and intellectuals from abroad to return to Armenia, and managed to create an environment of greater security and material well-being than Armenians had known since the outbreak of World War I."

## VI. The Communist Era

**1. Overview** "During the rule of Joseph V. Stalin (in power 1926-53), Armenian society and its economy were changed dramatically by Moscow policy makers.



In a period of twenty-five years, Armenia was industrialized and educated under strictly prescribed conditions, and nationalism was harshly suppressed.

After Stalin's death, Moscow allowed greater expression of national feeling, but the corruption endemic in communist rule continued until the very end in 1991. The last years of communism also brought disillusionment in what had been one of the most loyal republics in the Soviet Union until the late 1980s."

## 2. Stalinist Restructuring

**a. Restructuring** "Stalin's radical restructuring of the Soviet economic and political systems at the end of the 1920s ended the brief period of moderate rule...

Under Stalin the Communist Party of Armenia (CPA) used police terror to strengthen its political hold on the population and suppress all expressions of nationalism. At the height of the Great Terror orchestrated by Stalin in 1936-37, the ranks of CPA leaders and intellectuals were decimated by Lavrenti Beria, political commissar for the Transcaucasian republics."



**b. Industrialization impact** "Stalin's enforced social and economic engineering improved literacy and education and built communications and industrial infrastructures where virtually none had existed in tsarist times. As they emerged from the Stalin era in the 1950s, Armenians were more mobile, better educated, and ready to benefit from the less repressive policies of Stalin's successor, Nikita S. Khrushchev (in power 1953-64). The years of industrialization had promoted an upward social mobility through which peasants became workers; workers became foremen or managers; and managers became party and state officials."

### 3. Communism after Stalin

**a. Post-Stalin thaw** "After Stalin's death in 1953, Moscow granted the republic more autonomy in decision making, which meant that the local communist elite increased its power and became entrenched in Armenian politics in the 1950s and 1960s. Although overt political opposition remained tightly restricted, expressions of moderate nationalism were viewed with greater tolerance. Statues of Armenian national heroes were erected, including one of Saint Vartan, the fifth-century defender of Armenian Christianity."

**b. Crony corruption** "Even as Armenia continued its transformation from a basically agrarian nation to an industrial, urban society--by the early 1980s, only a third of Armenians lived in the countryside--the ruling elite remained largely unchanged."

As a result, corruption and favoritism spread, and an illegal "second economy" of black markets and bribery flourished."



### 4. The New Nationalism

**a. Underlying causes** "Three issues combined by 1988 to stimulate a broad-based Armenian nationalist movement."

**(1) Ecology** "First, the urbanization and industrialization of Armenia had brought severe ecological problems, the most threatening of which was posed by a nuclear power plant at Metsamor, west of Erevan."



**(2) Corruption** "Second, many Armenians were angered by the pervasive corruption and arrogance of the communist elite, which had become entrenched as a privileged ruling class."

**(3) Nagorno-Karabakh** "Third and most immediate, Armenians were increasingly concerned about the status of Nagorno-Karabakh (nah-GAHR-nah KAHR-ah-bahk), an autonomous region of Azerbaijan having nearly 200,000 Armenians living within Azerbaijan under Azerbaijani rule, isolated from mainstream Armenian culture."

**b. Armenian losses in Nagorno-Karabakh**

"Control of Nagorno-Karabakh (the conventional geographic term is based on the Russian for the phrase 'mountainous Karabakh') had been contested by the briefly independent republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan after World War I.



In 1924 the Soviet government designated the region an autonomous region under Azerbaijani jurisdiction within the TSFSR.

At the time, 94.4 percent of the estimated 131,500 people in the district were Armenian. Between 1923 and 1979, the Armenian population of the enclave dropped by about 1,000, comprising only about 76 percent of the population by the end of the period. In the same period, the Azerbaijani population quintupled to 37,000, or nearly 24 percent of the region's population.

Armenians feared that their demographic decline in Nagorno-Karabakh would replicate the fate of another historically Armenian region, Nakhichevan (nah-chee-chi-VAHN, an Azerbaijan enclave separated from the rest of the country by Armenia), which the Soviet Union had designated an autonomous republic under Azerbaijani administration in 1924.

In Nakhichevan the number of Armenians had declined from about 15,600 (15 percent of the total) in 1926 to about 3,000 (1.4 percent of the total) in 1979, while in the same period immigration and a higher birth rate had increased the Azerbaijani population from

about 85,400 (85 percent) to 230,000, or nearly 96 percent of the total."

### c. Cultural restriction in Nagorno-Karabakh

"In addition to fearing the loss of their numerical superiority, Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh resented restrictions on the development of the Armenian language and culture in the region. Although the Armenians generally lived better than Azerbaijanis in neighboring districts, their standard of living was not as high as that of their countrymen in Armenia.

Hostile to the Azerbaijanis, whom they blamed for their social and cultural problems, the vast majority of Karabakh Armenians preferred to learn Russian rather than Azerbaijani, the language of Azerbaijan. As early as the 1960s, clashes occurred between the Karabakh Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, and Armenian intellectuals petitioned Moscow for redress of their situation in Nagorno-Karabakh."

### d. Glasnost and Perestroika

"A series of escalating attacks and reprisals between the two sides began in early 1988.

Taking advantage of the greater freedom introduced by the glasnost (policy of openness and permission for public discussion) and perestroika (program of restructuring in Soviet Union, whereby revitalization of the Communist Party, economic, social and political mechanisms took place) policies of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev (in power 1985-91) in the late 1980s, Armenians held mass demonstrations in favor of uniting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.



In response to rumored Armenian demands, Azerbaijanis began fleeing the region. A two-day rampage in the industrial town of Sumgait (soom-GI-it), 15 miles northwest of Baku (bah-KOO), resulted in the deaths of more than 100 Armenians. During 1988, while Moscow hesitated to take decisive action, Armenians

grew increasingly disillusioned with Gorbachev's programs, and Azerbaijanis sought to protect their interests by organizing a powerful anti-Armenian nationalist movement."

### 5. Nagorno-Karabakh and Independence

"The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh (often called simply Karabakh) served as a catalyst for nationalist movements following the precipitous decline of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. In the early 1990s, the struggle defied all negotiating efforts of the West and Russia."

#### a. Karabakh as a national issue



**(1) Protests** "The protests of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh against Azerbaijani rule began in the spirit of perestroika, but the movement evolved quickly into a political organization, the Karabakh Committee, a broad anti-Communist coalition for democracy and national sovereignty. In the confusion following the earthquake that devastated northern Armenia in December 1988, Soviet authorities tried to stem the growing opposition to their rule by arresting the leaders of the committee..."

Massive demonstrations were held to demand the release of the members of the committee, and, in the elections to the Armenian Supreme Soviet, the legislative body of the republic, in May, Armenians chose delegates identified with the Karabakh cause. At that time, the flag of independent Armenia was flown for the first time since 1920. The release of the Karabakh Committee followed the 1989 election; for the next six months, the nationalist movement and the Armenian communist leadership worked as uncomfortable allies on the Karabakh issue."



**(2) Inconclusive policies** "Gorbachev's 1989 proposal for enhanced autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan satisfied neither Armenians nor Azerbaijanis, and a long and inconclusive conflict erupted between the two peoples."

In September 1989, Azerbaijan began an economic blockade of Armenia's vital fuel and supply lines through its territory, which until that time had carried about 90 percent of Armenia's imports from the other Soviet republics. In June 1989, numerous unofficial nationalist organizations joined together to form the Armenian Pan-national Movement (APM), to which the Armenian government granted official recognition."

**b. The Karabakh Crisis Escalates, 1989** "The Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict escalated steadily in the summer and fall of 1989...After more than two years of the Karabakh conflict, Armenia had gone from being one of the most loyal Soviet republics to complete loss of confidence in Moscow."

Gorbachev's unwillingness to grant Karabakh to Armenia and his failure to end the blockade convinced Armenians that the Kremlin considered it politically advantageous to back the more numerous Muslims. Even the invasion of Azerbaijan by Soviet troops in January 1990, ostensibly to stop pogroms (pah-GRUM, an organized massacre) against Armenians in Baku, failed to dampen the growing anti-Soviet mood among Armenians."

**c. New political climate** "The resignation of Suren Harutiunian as first secretary of the CPA in April 1990 and the triumph of the APM in the elections of the spring and summer of 1990 signaled the end of the old party elite and the rise of a new Armenian political class that had matured during the two years of tensions over Karabakh."



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The newly elected Armenian parliament (which retained the Soviet-era name Supreme Soviet or Supreme Council) chose Levon Ter-Petrosian instead of the new CPA first secretary as its chairman, and hence as head of state of the republic."

**(1) New Armenian leadership** In spring/summer elections of 1990, the Armenian Pan-national Movement made great political gains. "With the APM in power and the communists in opposition, the transition from Soviet-style government to an independent democratic state began in earnest.



The new government faced a nearly complete collapse of order in the republic. Buildings were seized by armed men in Erevan, and several independent militia groups operated in Erevan as well as on the Azerbaijani frontier.

Frustrated by the Azerbaijani blockade and determined to defend their republic and Karabakh, members of Armenia's **Fidain** (whose name was taken from an Arabic term literally meaning "one who sacrifices himself" and recalling the Armenian freedom fighters of the turn of the century) raided arsenals and police stations to arm themselves for the coming battles. In July Gorbachev demanded immediate disarmament of the Armenian militias and threatened military intervention if they did not comply. In response, Ter-Petrosian's government itself disarmed the independent militias and restored order in Erevan."

**(2) Republic of Armenia** "On August 23, 1990, Armenia formally declared its intention to become sovereign and independent, with Nagorno-Karabakh an integral part of what now would be known as the Republic of Armenia rather than the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Armenian nation was defined broadly to include not only those living in the territory of the republic but also the worldwide Armenian émigré population as well."

**(3) Temporary historical asides** "In redefining Armenian national interests, the government acknowledged--but temporarily put aside--the painful question of Armenian genocide, having in mind improved relations with traditional enemies Turkey and Iran. This policy prompted strong criticism from extreme nationalist groups that wanted to recover territory lost to Turkey in World War I. The CPA was also vehemently critical."

## VII. Independence

### 1. Overtures and Accusations



**a. Independent Armenian referendum** "In January 1991, the Armenian Supreme Soviet decided not to participate in Gorbachev's planned referendum on preserving the Soviet Union. In March the parliament announced that, instead, the republic would hold its own referendum in September, in compliance with the procedure outlined in the Soviet constitution for a republic to secede.

Although literal compliance would mean that Armenia would not be fully independent for five years after the referendum, Moscow soon moved to change Armenia's course. Without notifying the Armenian government, Moscow sent paratroopers to the republic in

early May, ostensibly to protect Soviet defense installations in Armenia. Ter-Petrosian's official statement in reaction characterized the move as a virtual declaration of war by the Soviet Union."

**b. Caution toward Moscow unrest** "In August 1991, when a self-proclaimed emergency committee attempted to overthrow Gorbachev and take control in Moscow, the Armenian government refused to sanction its actions. Fearing an extension of the Soviet incursion of May, Ter-Petrosian approached the Moscow coup very cautiously. The republic's Defense Committee secretly resolved to have the Armenian armed forces go underground and wage guerrilla warfare. Ter-Petrosian, who believed that Gorbachev's personal blunders, indecisiveness, and concessions to conservative communists were to blame for the coup, was overjoyed when the conservatives were defeated.

But the coup itself convinced Armenians of the need to move out of the Soviet Union as rapidly as possible, and it validated Ter-Petrosian's refusal to participate in the revival of the Soviet Union advocated by Gorbachev."



**c. Armenian elections (Sep 1991)** "Within two months of the coup, Armenians went to the polls twice. In September 1991, over 99 percent of voters approved the republic's commitment to independence. The immediate aftermath of that vote was the Armenian Supreme Soviet's declaration of full independence, on September 23, in disregard of the constitution's restraints on secession. Then in October, Ter-Petrosian was elected overwhelmingly as president of the republic. He now had a popular mandate to carry out his vision of Armenian independence and self-sufficiency."

**d. Nagorno-Karabakh conflict** "As political changes occurred within the republic, armed conflict continued in Nagorno-Karabakh during 1991 (between mostly Christian Armenian forces and Muslim Azerbaijanis).



Armenia officially denied supporting the 'Nagorno-Karabakh defense forces' that were pushing Azerbaijani forces out of the region; Armenia also accused the Soviet Union of supporting Azerbaijan as punishment for Armenia's failure to sign Gorbachev's new Union Treaty. In turn, Azerbaijan called Armenia an aggressor state whose national policy included annexation of Azerbaijani territory."

## 2. Postindependence Armenia

**a. Economic and democratic challenges** "Two immediate tasks facing independent Armenia were rebuilding its devastated economy and strengthening its fledgling democratic institutions.

But the escalating war in Nagorno-Karabakh and the effective blockade of the republic by the Azerbaijanis led to a total collapse of the economy. By early 1993, the government seemed helpless before mounting economic and political problems. The last remaining oil and gas pipelines through neighboring Georgia, which itself was being torn by civil and interethnic war, were blown up by saboteurs.

To survive the cold, Armenians in Erevan cut down the city's trees, and plans were made to start up the nuclear power plant at Metsamor."

**b. Cease-fire** In May 1994 a cease-fire came into effect, with Armenian forces controlling most of the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave. Though winning reelection on 22 Sep 1996, President Ter-Petrosian resigned in Feb 1998 over issues of fraud and Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts. Robert Kocharian, from Karabakh, became president on 30 March 1998.



## Appendix: The Armenian Diaspora



**1. Overview** "Beginning in the eleventh century, a long series of invasions, migrations, conversions, deportations, and massacres reduced Armenians to a minority population in their historic homeland on the Armenian Plateau. Under these conditions, a large-scale Armenian Diaspora of merchants, clerics, and intellectuals reached cities in Russia, Poland, Western Europe, and India."

Most Armenians remaining in historical Armenia under the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century survived as peasant farmers in eastern Anatolia, but others resettled in Constantinople, Smyrna, and other cities in the empire. There they became artisans, moneylenders, and traders. In the nineteenth century, the political uncertainties that beset the Ottoman Empire prompted further insecurity in the Armenian population. Finally, the Young Turk government either massacred or forcibly removed the vast majority of Armenians from the eastern Anatolian provinces in 1915."



**2. Current Statistics** "Today about half the world's Armenians live outside Armenia. Armenian communities have emerged in the Middle East, Russia, Poland, Western Europe, India, and North America, where Armenians have gained a reputation for their skill in crafts and in business. Although accurate statistics are not available, the Armenian Diaspora is about equally divided between the 1.5 million Armenians in the other republics of the former Soviet Union and a similar number in the rest of the world."

The post-Communist Republic of Armenia has officially defined the Armenian nation to include the far-flung Diaspora, a policy in accord with the feelings of many Diaspora Armenians."

**3. Cultural Preservation** "A common theme in Armenian discourse is the need to preserve the culture and heritage of the Armenian people through education and mobilization of younger members of the community.



In this task, the Republic of Armenia enjoys the enthusiastic support of the international Armenian community, which sees a new opportunity to impart information to the rest of the world about Armenian culture--and especially to rectify perceived inattention to the tragedy of 1915."

**4. Solidarity** "The Armenian Diaspora maintains its coherence through the church, political parties (despite their mutual hostilities), charitable organizations, and a network of newspapers published in Armenian and other languages.

Armenian émigrés in the United States have endowed eight university professorships in Armenian studies. With the reemergence of an independent Armenia, Diaspora Armenians have established industries, a technical university, exchange programs, and medical clinics in Armenia. Several prominent Diaspora Armenians have served in the Armenian government."



"Set your sights higher."

## Vocabulary List: Historical Overview--Armenia

**Anatolia** (ah-nah-TOH-lee-ah) Area comprising present day Asian Turkey and parts of northern Iraq/Iran/Syria

**Ashot I** A Bagratid king who ushered in the second golden age for Armenia, 862-977.

**Byzantine Empire** (BIZ-ahn-teen) The eastern Roman Empire @476-1453

**Caucasia** (kah-KAY-zhah) Mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Seas

**Cilicia** (sah-LIH-shee-ah) Northeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea

**Diaspora** Scattering

**Fidain** Armenian freedom party, taken from Arabic term meaning "one who sacrifices himself."

**Glasnost** Gorbachev policy of openness and permission for public discussion within the Soviet Union, 1984-89

**Gorbachev, Mikhail** (GOHR-buh-chof) Leader of the Communist party in Russia, 1985-91 who initiated the policies of glasnost and perestroika

**Gregory, Saint** Known as the Illuminator, this saint introduced Christianity into Armenia in the 300s, following a series of miracles.

**Khrushchev, Nikita** (kroosh-CHOF) Leader of Communist party in Russia after Stalin, 1955-1964

**Mesrop, Saint** (mes-ROHP) Also known as Mashtots (mash-TOHTS), this early religious figure devised an alphabet for the Armenian peoples.



**Nagorno-Karabakh** (nah-GAHR-nah KAHR-ah-bahk) Self-governing region of Azerbaijan where nearly 200,000 Armenians live within the confines of Azerbaijani rule, isolated from mainstream Armenian culture

**Nikhichevan** (nah-chee-chi-VAHN) Azerbaijan enclave separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by Armenia

**Parthians** (PAHR-thee-ahn) Central Asian enemies of Armenia from 30 B.C. to 200 A.D.

**Perestroika** Gorbachev policy of restructuring in the Soviet Union, whereby economic, social and political revitalization would take place in the Communist system, 1984-89

**Pogrom** (pah-GRUM) Organized massacres

**Seljuk** (sel-JOOK) Turkish dynasties of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries

**Tigran the Great** (r. 95-55 B.C.) Also known as Tigranes (ti-GRAY-neeZ) this ruler of ancient Armenia oversaw the largest and most influential development of the country in its early history.

**TSFSR** Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, comprised of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia under Communist rule

## Review Quiz: Historical Overview--Armenia



**Part 1--Fill in the Blanks** Fill in the blanks with the most correct word listed that follows. Not all words listed will be used.

(1)\_\_\_\_\_ is another term for present-day Asian Turkey. Armenia reached its greatest size and influence under King (2)\_\_\_\_\_ the Great.

Following miracles tradition relates were performed by Saint (3)\_\_\_\_\_ the Illuminator, Christianity became a strong part of Armenian culture. Saint (4)\_\_\_\_\_ devised an alphabet for the Armenian language.

During Soviet times, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia formed the (5)\_\_\_\_\_.

Gorbachev's policy of (6)\_\_\_\_\_ and perestroika introduced greater (7)\_\_\_\_\_ into Soviet life.

In addition to corruption and the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, another cause of 1988 nationalist resurgence in Armenia centered on (8)\_\_\_\_\_ matters.

By early 1993, the Armenian government seemed (9)\_\_\_\_\_ in the face of economic and political problems within the nation.

Due to invasions, migrations, conversions, deportations, and massacres over the centuries, the Armenian (10)\_\_\_\_\_ reduced Armenians to a minority population within their historic homeland.

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Anatolia  
Apostolic Church  
bold and effective  
Diaspora  
ecology  
Felix

freedom  
glasnost  
Gregory  
helpless  
Lewis  
mafia

Mesrop  
restrictions  
Tigran  
TSFSR  
USSFR  
Westinghouse

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## Part 2--Multiple Choice

Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Another name for the mountainous region between the Black and Caspian Seas is

- A. Appalachia.
- B. Pyrenees.
- C. Caucasia.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Under Tzarist oversight within Armenia,

- A. prisons became overcrowded with political dissidents.
- B. village isolation declined, a relative peace and security reigned.
- C. Cossacks forced recalcitrant Armenians to obey Tzar imposed rule.

## Unit 11: Historical Overview--Armenia

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3. \_\_\_\_\_ In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Ottoman and Russian policies toward Armenians were characterized by
- A. suppression.
  - B. millet rule.
  - C. freedom granting initiatives.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Estimates of the number of Armenians killed between 1915-17 range from
- A. 20,000 to 200,000.
  - B. 200,000 to 600,000.
  - C. 600,000 to 2 million.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Under Stalin, Armenia
- A. was industrialized and educated, though nationalism was suppressed.
  - B. became known for its corruption free government.
  - C. boasted the highest military recruitment statistics in the Soviet Union.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ In the early 1980's, the term "second economy" refers to
- A. efforts Armenian people used to raise vegetables for profit on small, privately owned plots of ground.
  - B. illegal black markets and bribery which flourished in Armenia.
  - C. the boost in industrial capital in Armenia as a long-term result of Khrushchev's liberalization policies.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Nagorno-Karabakh is located
- A. in the mountainous region of Armenia.
  - B. in the mountainous area of Azerbaijan.
  - C. next to the Caspian Sea.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Within Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian language and culture were
- A. allowed to flourish.
  - B. restricted.
  - C. replaced by Russian language programs.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Within the newly formed Republic of Armenia, the Armenian nation was defined as
- A. all people living within the boundaries of the Armenian state.
  - B. Armenian émigrés scattered throughout the world and within the Republic.
  - C. only Armenian people living within Armenia.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Today, roughly \_\_\_\_\_ of the world's Armenians live outside Armenia.
- A. one-third
  - B. one-half
  - C. two-thirds



## Resources for Further Study: Historical Overview--Armenia

Friedrich, Paul and Norma Diamond. Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Vol. VI, Russia and Eurasia/China. New York: G.K. Hall, 1994. (Article on Armenia, [pp. 27-31]).

Kaiser, Phillip ed. Country Profile of the Republic of Armenia. McLean, Virginia: Science Applications International Corporation, 1997.

Lang, David Marshall. Armenia, Cradle of Civilization. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970.

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<[www://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html)>



"Character is what enables us to withstand the rigors of combat or the daily challenges that might tempt us to compromise our principles. Strengthening values will allow us to strengthen our inner self, our bonding to others, and our commitments to a purpose beyond that of ourselves...From the character of our soldiers we forge the moral shield of the Army."

General John A Wickham, Chief of Staff, June 1983-1987

